

A friend for



Vincent Reid, MD
Oncologic Surgeon
Hall-Perrine Cancer Center



Deb Wilbur, MD
Medical Oncologist
Hall-Perrine Cancer Center

Nancy and Tom Lackner knew Deb Sedlacek, RN, was a Mercy parish nurse at their church, First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids. But they didn't really understand what she did — until they needed her.

Tom, a recently retired Coe College biology professor, called Deb shortly after Nancy, development assistant at Indian Creek Nature Center, was diagnosed with ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), a non-invasive cancer in the milk ducts of her left breast.

From that point on, Deb accompanied the Lackners to almost all of Nancy's doctors' appointments, including the first one at Mercy's Hall-Perrine Cancer Center.

Prior to the appointment, Vincent Reid, MD, the area's only fellowship-trained oncology surgeon, set up a multidisciplinary clinic with medical oncologist Deb Wilbur, MD, and radiation oncologist Janet Merfeld, MD. The doctors discussed Nancy's case and then called Nancy, Tom and Deb into the room to discuss her diagnosis and treatment options.

After the appointment, Deb offered spiritual support by praying with Nancy and Tom in a corner of the cancer center. Then she helped them sift through everything they had just learned.

"I was really impressed by Dr. Reid," says Nancy. "The tipping point for me was when he strongly recommended I have an MRI in both breasts. He said it could provide additional information about the (potential to develop cancer) in my right breast and tell us more about the cancer in the left breast."

The MRI showed that a mastectomy was the only option for the left breast due to the extent of the cancer. On a positive note, Dr. Reid said it showed no medical reason to remove the right

breast. So, in October 2013, Nancy had just her left breast removed. Immediately following the mastectomy, Kahlil Andrews, MD, Physicians' Clinic of Iowa (PCI) plastic and reconstructive surgeon, inserted a tissue expander to prepare Nancy for follow-up reconstructive breast surgery.

After surgery, the sentinel node was biopsied and revealed no signs the cancer had spread, so chemotherapy and radiation were not necessary. Nancy met with Lou Ann Weber, an occupational therapist at Hall-Perrine Cancer Center and also a breast cancer survivor, to be fitted with a mastectomy bra. "Lou Ann was another member of the Mercy team that made my life a little easier," says Nancy.

Nancy's last reconstructive surgery with Dr. Andrews was in May 2014 and she's happy to be back to "normal," other than reporting in for

six-month check-ups with Dr. Wilbur. All of her care was provided at Mercy's Hall-Perrine Cancer Center. She will continue to have yearly mammograms on her right breast.

Deb comments, "It is a privilege when people let me into their lives to help. I thanked the Lackners for allowing me to companion with them through this."

Parish nurses work with ministers and churches to improve the health and spiritual well-being of parishioners. They do everything from conduct blood pressure screenings to ministering to individuals with health concerns.

"It is a privilege when people let me into their lives to help."

*Deb Sedlacek, RN
Mercy Parish Nurse*

Life



NANCY AND TOM LACKNER CALLED DEB SEDLACEK (LEFT INSET), A MERCY PARISH NURSE FROM THEIR CHURCH, FOR HER HELP AFTER NANCY WAS DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER.



"Deb knew when to be quiet and listen, and when to raise a question or say something supportive to us," says Nancy. "Deb was a medically knowledgeable friend who always provided thoughtful comments without trying to steer us."

Deb says, "When they had questions about what they should do, I'd ask them to process it together and then let me know if they needed anything. At the end of each doctor appointment, we'd get together in a corner and I'd say a prayer."

Tom notes, "It was really nice having Deb there through all the appointments, the surgery and afterward." He looks forward to maintaining their friendship, "but hopefully not in her parish nurse role — just in her friend role."

Melissa Cullum, Mercy's Community Benefit Manager, says parish nurses are particularly successful because "church communities are well-established, offering a unique sense of trust to parishioners who feel more comfortable talking to someone they know about their concerns."

Nancy agrees, adding, "The spiritual aspect was always underlying. Deb was a symbol of the support I knew was there in my congregation."

Mercy has offered the International Parish Nurse Resource Center's Faith Community Nursing curriculum since March 2010 to area nurses. As part of Mercy's community benefit programming, Mercy employs parish nurses to work part-time in six area churches. Community Benefit has been a part of Mercy Medical Center's heritage for more than 100 years, when the hospital was founded by the Sisters of Mercy to take care of the sick and the poor.



Janet Merfeld, MD
Radiation Oncologist
Hall-Perrine Cancer Center

Visit www.hallperrinecancercenter.org to take a virtual tour of the cancer center and learn more about Mercy's world-class cancer services. If you're interested in learning more about the parish nurse program, call Melissa Cullum at (319) 221-8568.